

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

SSM-03 /065 W

-----130448Z 045961 /21

R 120705Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3057

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

DIA WASHDC

SECDEF

USIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SY, US

SUBJECT: SYRIAN MEDIA CONTINUES TO REFLECT ON CARTER-AL
ASSAD MEETINGS

SUMMARY: CARTER-AL-ASSAD ENCOUNTER CONTINUED TO GENERATE
HEAVY MEDIA COVERAGE. AL-ASSAD DEPICTED AS EARNESTLY DESIRING
PEACE BUT ADHERING TO FUNDAMENTAL ARAB PRINCIPLES. US CALLED
UPON TO TAKE "NEUTRAL, OBJECTIVE, AND POSITIVE STAND." INTER-
NATIONAL PRESS AND UNNAMED OBSERVERS FREQUENTLY QUOTED TO
DEMONSTRATE ADDED PRESTIGE WHICH HAS ACCRUED TO SYRIA THROUGH
MEETINGS. INVITATION AL-ASSAD EXTENDED FOR PRESIDENT CARTER'S
SON JEFF TO VISIT SYRIA MENTIONED IN LEAD ARTICLE. COMMENTARIES
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CALLED UPON US TO ADOPT MORE BALANCED POSITION BUT
ONE EDITORIAL CAUTIONED THAT US POSITION SHOULD NOT
BE ONE OF PASSIVE NEUTRALITY SINCE "THIS NEGATIVE
SPECTATOR POSITION IS NOT IN KEEPING WITH AMERICAN
PLEDGES." END SUMMARY.

1. SYRIAN MEDIA CONTINUED TO GIVE AFTERMATH CARTER-AL-ASSAD

MEETINGS WIDE AND PROMINENT COVERAGE. AL-ASSAD'S INTERVIEW WITH CBS RUN IN PRESS AND ON RADIO AND TELEVISION. EXCERPTS PUBLISHED FROM INTERNATIONAL PRESS REPORTS ON ENCOUNTER WHICH HIGHLIGHT SYRIA'S ROLE IN PEACE EFFORTS. TISHRIIN AND OTHER DAILIES FEATURED SEVERAL PICTURES OF CARTER AND AL-ASSAD BEAMING AT ONE ANOTHER ALONG WITH OTHER PHOTOS OF AL-ASSAD MEETING WITH SWISS PRESIDENT.

2. ALL DAILIES HEADLINED AL-ASSAD'S STATEMENT THAT US ASKED TO TAKE "NEUTRAL, OBJECTIVE AND POSITIVE STAND." LEAD TISHRIIN ARTICLE CLAIMED THAT POLITICAL OBSERVERS DESCRIBED MEETING AS BETWEEN "AL-ASSAD, WHO ENJOYS ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL STATURE AND REPRESENTS ARAB CONFRONTATION STATES, AND CARTER, WHO COULD TAKE KEY STAND DRIVING FORWARD AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BRINGING ABOUT JUST PEACE."

3. TISHRIIN IN SPECIAL DISPATCH FROM GENEVA CLAIMED THAT POLITICAL AND PRESS CIRCLES IN GENEVA AND OTHER EUROPEAN CAPITALS CONCUR, THAT, "SYRIAN DIPLOMACY HAS MAINTAINED CONSISTENT POSTURE AND WHAT IS CURRENTLY HAPPENING IN INTERNATIONAL ARENA IS NOT MOVE ON SYRIA'S PART TOWARDS OTHERS' POSITIONS, BUT RATHER MOVE BY OTHERS TOWARDS SYRIA. SAME OBSERVERS OPINED THAT, "SYRIAN DIPLOMACY HAS SUCCEEDED IN OBTAINING GREATER UNDERSTANDING BY OTHERS OF SYRIAN ROLE IN THEIR REGION." MEMBER SYRIAN DELEGATION QUOTED AS SAYING THAT IT NOT TRUE THAT US HOLDS 99 PERCENT OF CARDS IN REGION SINCE OTHERS SUCH AS UN, SOVIET UNION AND THIRD WORLD STATES ALSO HAVE LARGE ROLE.

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4. UNNAMED OBSERVERS IN CAIRO SAW THREE FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO MEETING'S SIGNIFICANCE INCLUDING:

--UNIFIED AND COORDINATED POSITION AMONG CONFRONTATION STATES AND NUMBER OF "SUPPORTING" ARAB STATES;

--THE US POSITION WHICH HAS GIVEN THE PROBLEM PRIORITY IN PRES. CARTER'S CONCERNS AND THE SOVIET POSITION AS OUTLINED IN THE BREZHNEV STATEMENT (PRESUMABLY TRADE UNIONS' ADDRESS);

--THE POSITIVE PALESTINIAN POSITION WHICH RESPONDS TO ARAB EFFORTS FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE FOLLOWING PNC DECISION TO SET UP STATE ON NATIONAL LAND AND TO OPEN WAY TO PLO PARTICIPATION IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

5. ARTICLE CONCLUDED NOTING THAT AL-ASSAD HAD INVITED PRESIDENT CARTER'S SON JEFF "TO VISIT SYRIA TO SEE ITS

TOURIST SITES AND ANCIENT RUINS SINCE HIS HOBBY IS TO
TAKE PHOTOS OF HISTORICAL RUINS."

6. COMMENTARIES TOOK POSITION THAT MEETINGS REPRESENTED
IMPORTANT LANDMARK ALONG ROAD TO PEACE BUT NOTED THAT THERE
LONG WAY TO GO. AL-ASSAD DEPICTED AS SINCERELY DESIRING PEACE
BUT ADHERING TO FUNDAMENTAL ARAB PRINCIPLES. ALL EDITORIALS
CALLED UPON US TO TAKE MORE BALANCED POSITION IN DISPUTE, AND
COLUMN BY AMIID AL-KHULI IN AL-BAATH ASSERTED THAT US
POSITION SHOULD NOT BE ONE OF PASSIVE NEUTRILITY SINCE
"THIS NEGATIVE SPECTATOR POSITION NOT IN KEEPING WITH AMERICAN
PLEDGES." AT SAME TIME AL-KHULI INDICATED APPROVAL FOR
ADMINISTRATION'S PRONOUNCEMENTS ON NEED FOR PALESTINIAN
HOMELAND AND COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION TO CONFLICT.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SY, US, (ASAD, HAFIZ), (CARTER, JIMMY)
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